SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

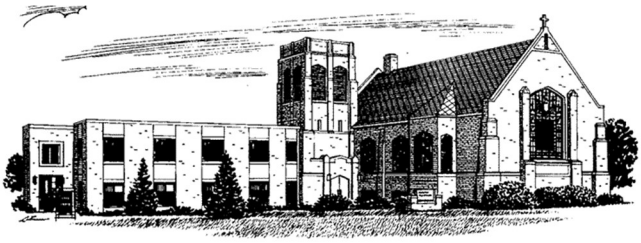
The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org
Patrick Blanchard, Vicar
Cell: 616-460-7150
Email: pblanchard13@live.com
Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com
Irma Gorman, Organist
Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Bradley717@gmail.com
Megan Savage, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org
Emily Gaul, Child Care

Typical Sunday at Saron:
Fall, Winter and Spring:
8:30am Worship On-Location
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available
9:40 Learning Hour for Ages 2-Adult

Summer of 2022 (beginning June 5):
9:30am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia
Saron's Mission: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!*



PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR MARCH 2022

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
Psalm 23:1

For many, this psalm is one of their favorites. It is likely one of the best-known pieces of Scripture by Christians all over the world. It can be heard in hospital rooms, at funerals, and in daily devotions.

Shepherd Me O God, based on Psalm 23, will be the theme of our mid-week Lenten series this year, beginning March 9. We will recite it together and we will sing it. And together we will encounter a God who shepherds all of us and tends our needs. Whether you attend the mid-week gatherings or not, and I hope you will, there will be available a complementary devotional and Psalm 23 card. (An electronic copy will be available through our weekly mailing.) I encourage you to pray this psalm daily as your Lenten discipline and as you spend some quiet time with God, who leads, guides, and restores.

March 2, Ash Wednesday with Imposition of Ashes and traditional Ash Wednesday texts
12:15pm and 7pm

March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6 at 7pm
Holden Evening Prayer
with Reflections on Psalm 23

All evening services will also be available via Zoom.

Update in Covid-19 Precautions

During the February council meeting, we decided to maintain the current Covid-19 precautions, which includes wearing masks in the building. Most meetings and studies are intending to resume on-location as leaders feel is appropriate. We will continue to monitor the situation for necessary adjustments.

General Information

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan and/or Vicar Patrick
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 8am-noon
Wednesdays as needed
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:15am-11am (approx)
Megan Savage (Bookkeeper):
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30pm

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Richard Schalon is at the Whitcomb Tower Retirement Center in St. Joseph; **Bernice Koski** is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman; **Kathleen Preston** is at Woodland Terrace in St. Joseph.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!
March 2022

3/1	Michael Hoodlebrink
3/4	Krin Jurgensen
3/4	Caleb Pudell
3/8	Austin Kamala
3/9	Colbe Pudell
3/10	Brad Frey
3/12	Susan Rood
3/14	Ruth Stelling
3/14	Jennifer Vredberg
3/15	Brendan Hoch
3/17	Mia Bradley
3/18	Peter Johnson
3/18	Constance Slater
3/19	Karleann Stankiewicz
3/19	Alexander Tzouanakis
3/20	Nicole Rick
3/21	Kaitlin Hooper
3/22	Janet Oleson
3/23	Molly Becker
3/25	James Nadeau
3/25	James Nicholas
3/26	Sue Bailey
3/27	Eloise Moely
3/27	Shelly Stankiewicz
3/28	Matthew Gacek

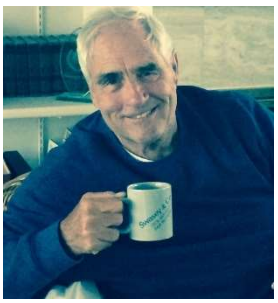
Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!
March 2022

3/2 Tom & Janet Taylor

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

IN SYMPATHY



We extend our condolences to Doris and family upon the death of her husband,
William Swasey,
on January 24, 2022.
A memorial service was held at Saron.

We also extend our condolences to Charlie Pater and family upon the death of his mother,
Lorraine Pater,
on February 12, 2022.

God is our refuge and strength.
- Psalm 46:1a

CONGRATULATIONS

We joyfully celebrate the marriage of **Cami & John Vitek**, that began on January 1, 2022. Congratulations to the whole family, including Connor, Colin and Aiden Ashley.

Meet Hazel Frances, the brand-new daughter of Scott & Kate Kohs.

This little beauty was born on February 15, weighing 8lbs 15oz.

Congratulations to the Kohs family, including big brother Charlie and grandparents Ken & Suzy Kohs!

BAPTISMS

We welcomed Sterling Michael, son of Claire & Kyle Carter, and Ramona Dorothy, daughter of Jane & John Wallace, into the family of Christ on Sunday, February 13, 2022. Sterling's sponsors are Nora & Michael Steele. Ramona's sponsors are Claire & Kyle Carter. Congratulations, Sterling and Ramona!

A NOTE FROM THE VICAR

We all have different things that we are passionate about. It really doesn't matter what your passion is; what matters is that it gets a great deal of your focus and energy. One of my greatest passions is the genuine acceptance of all people. The subject is a very personal one for me. You see, my youngest son has a profound case of ADHD. He was bullied and struggled mightily in school. He still bears the scars today. Perhaps sharing someone's pain is just one of the reasons I am so pleased to see Saron becoming a Reconciling In Christ congregation. RIC not only welcomes but also embraces everyone regardless of sexual orientation, mental or physical limitations. Our differences become our strengths and the body of Christ is glorified. I look forward to working closely with the RIC implementation team.

Peace,
Vicar Patrick

FORTIFY & fly

Wishing you had claimed one of the pews we are replacing with the new sanctuary seating? It may not be too late! As of this article, we had 8 of the of the 12'6" length remaining. It's even possible to split these long ones at the center support and end up with a more manageable length. Ed Staude can give you more details on that. If you are interested in reserving a pew, you must finalize your selection with Ed. He will also coordinate getting into the church for you to remove your pew. All must be out of the building by March 28. There is no cost associated with taking a pew but donations are always accepted.

Ed Staude
636/288-1016
staude.edmund@gmail.com

Teaser Tidbit: we have several woodworkers in our congregation that are experimenting with using the pews to make crosses. If we can make it work, these may be available for sale/donations in the coming months. Wouldn't that be a neat keepsake to preserve a little of Saron's history!

At the end of January 2022, we had collected an additional $750 for a total of $374,387 towards our pledge total of $367,205. Yes, we are still accepting donations towards Fortify & Fly so if you have a commitment you wish to fulfill, we will gratefully collect it. We appreciate your continued support!

Worship

NURSERY

Nursery service is available during both services. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For pre-schoolers that occasionally need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex. There are also clipboards with coloring pages, as well as children's bulletins, to assist kids as they transition into participating in worship. **It's vital to embrace having family units in all stages in our congregation and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families negotiating life with children. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage concerns and suggestions.

For health and safety reasons, only the approved childcare providers assigned for that day should be in the nursery space during worship. Nursing mothers are always welcome!

NEW MEMBERS

Please let Pastor know if you are interested in joining Saron, or would like to learn more about the Christian faith in the Lutheran tradition.

PRAYER GROUP

Join us Mondays at 11am for a time of quiet reflection and prayer, which includes lifting up the requests offered on Sundays at worship or via other means. We meet in the sanctuary.

ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

We will continue the Zoom fellowship at 11am through the winter. The link remains the same each week and is at the bottom of the email sent on Thursdays.

ALTAR FLOWERS

You can sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by calling the church office. Make sure to note any special occasion to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Please follow up with a check to Saron with "Flowers" on the memo line. Thank you for helping to beautify our worship services! Feel free to take them home after the last service to enjoy. **Simply return the vase to Saron to be reused.**

FACEBOOK

We often share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

March 6: First Sunday in Lent
Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Romans 10:8b-13
Luke 4:1-13

March 13: Second Sunday in Lent
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Psalm 27
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 13:31-35

March 20: Third Sunday in Lent
Isaiah 55:1-9
Psalm 63:1-8
1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9

March 27: Fourth Sunday in Lent
Joshua 5:9-12
Psalm 32
2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Youth

Our youth group met on February 20 at the Bradley Home for a pool party and taco bar after church. We were having so much fun we forgot to take a picture until everyone was leaving.

We plan to meet again on March 27. April and May dates and a possible service project will be communicated once dates are locked down.

Are you in grades 6-12? This group is for you! Contact Merrily at merrilyannsmith@gmail.com with any questions.

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

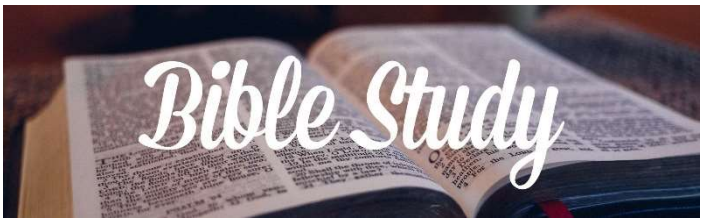
SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

We offer a time of age-appropriate Bible studies between the two services, from **9:40-10:30:**

- **Grades 5 and Under** meet in the Sunday school classroom.
- **Confirmation Students** (Grades 6-8) meet in the confirmation classroom.
- **Adult Forum** meets in the upstairs lounge.

At this time, we will be utilizing masks, per the current BCHD guidance. We look forward to seeing everyone!

We are always looking for volunteers to assist with Sunday School, even just once. Please contact the church office at 269/983-1273 or by email at info@saronlutheran.org with any interest.



TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

We will take a break during Lent and return to our studies after Easter. Looking forward to seeing you in the Spring! **All are welcome!**

"Iron Sharpens Iron and One Person Sharpens the Wits of Another"

If you have any questions about this group, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com) or Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com).

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

We will take a break for most of Lent and return with a new study after Easter. Details of that study will be communicated soon.

Please let Pastor know if you ever have any questions or need the Zoom link. **This class is open to all interested in attending.** You are welcome to join any time, for one session or for many.

1ST SUNDAY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

We will meet on March 6 at 6:30pm. Closer to the date, information will be sent regarding meeting on-location or via Zoom. Verify you are on the email notification list by **contacting Kathy Cowall at 269/428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com.**

In March, we'll be discussing "100 Days of Happiness: A Novel," by Fausto Brizzi. Lucio Battistini just found out he only has 100 days left to live. He now has the chance to spend the rest of his life making every moment count. You will learn in 100 chapters exactly how he does. Lots to discuss with this book.

Jump forward to April 3rd and we will be talking about "The Four Winds", by Kristen Hannah. "The Bestselling Hardcover Novel of the Year", according to Publishers Weekly. It's been compared to Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath". We will explore why and form our own opinions. Beginning in 1921 and going through the Great Depression, it's the story of one woman's courage and struggle that defines a generation. Sound interesting? Come join us. Be a part of the discussion. Everyone's opinion is welcome all the time.

"*To acquire the habit of reading is to construct for yourself a refuge from almost all the miseries of life*."
- W. Somerset Maugham

MEN'S MONTHLY DEVOTION

There will be no Saron Men's Devotion/Breakfast in March.

Contact Dennis Lundgren with any questions at dennis.lundgren@me.com

Women of the ELCA

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Due to a scheduled church Lenten service, Deborah Circle will NOT meet in March. We will be participating in a service project, which will be detailed in a future group email.

Contact Melanie McCammon at 269/449-8399 for more information about this group.

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex after the service? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. We are asking for donations of individual, store-packaged treats at this time. Please plan for 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

NOISY OFFERING

We receive a noisy offering (or those not-so-noisy bills) on the first Sunday of each month. These gifts are sent to ELCA World Hunger. Thank you for your generous offerings!

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

Simple food, honestly sourced and lovingly made creates connections, gives fuel to the fight, and starves ignorance and apathy. – Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen

On January 27, 115 people at the Soup Kitchen were served a sack lunch prepared by the members of Saron. Cookies were provided by Kate Ulrey, Kathi Anserello, Stephen Bell, Amy Nelson, and Merrily Smith. Lunches were packed by Deb Standen, Jim Manore, Mary Alice Brunner, and Sue Bailey.
If you feel comfortable helping to prepare a sack lunch at the Soup Kitchen or providing cookies, please use the link in the weekly email to sign up or contact Kathie Bradley at 269/921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!*

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

You will see the RIC logo on various communications and signage for our church. Watch for more updates about our continued inclusivity journey!

If you ever have any questions or need clarification, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:
Connor Ashley: cashley1837@outlook.com
Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Laura Hicks: 517/930-0579 or lhicks42@gmail.com
Darlene Kiessel: 269/313-4062 or kiessel@me.com
Diane Madej (Open Hearts. Open Church): 231/670-0328 or dianemadej234@gmail.com
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org

INTERFAITH ACTION

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

Support

The Support Committee will be meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm. Meetings will continue to be held on Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey at josephulrey@yahoo.com to receive more information. Thanks!

Facilities

HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9:30am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

LAWN MOWING

It's time to start planning for keeping our grounds maintained in the Spring. Please let us know if you would be willing to mow Saron's grass. The lawn mower and gas are provided. This service saves Saron significant money over paying for an outside company. Email Brad Frey or Scott Kohs with your interest and dates you already know you are unavailable so they can begin to organize a schedule. Spring will be here quick!

Brad Frey: Bradford.frey@yahoo.com
Scott Kohs: kohssc@gmail.com

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

MARCH 2022 Newsletter

We received this neat postcard from the Readiness Center in Benton Harbor with art created by the kids. Readiness Center is one of our Fortify & Fly tithe organizations. The following note was included:

"Thank you for showing us some love in 2021. Your gift made a significant impact on the work we do with the children & parents and we are so grateful. Thanks for being so "sweet!" Thank you for being an example of Christ's love for all. Happy Valentine's Day!"

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead 1 hour when going to bed on March 12. You've been warned so this will not be accepted as a valid excuse for why you missed church on **Sunday, March 13.**

March 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	**2** 9:30am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 12:15pm & 7pm Ash Wed Worship	**3** 7pm Choir Rehearse	**4**	5
6 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**7** 11am Prayer Group	**8** 8pm Support Meeting	**9** 9:30am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Lent Service	**10** 6pm Bells Rehearse 7pm Choir Rehearse	**11**	12 **Set clock ahead before going to bed!**
13 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning 11am Worship with Zoom Option **Daylight Savings**	**14** 11am Prayer Group **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**15**	**16** 9:30am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Lent Service	**17** 6pm Bells Rehearse 7pm Choir Rehearse Pastor on Vacation →	**18**	19 →
20 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning 11am Worship with Zoom Option →	**21** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Council Meeting →	**22** →	**23** 9:30am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Lent Service	**24** 6pm Bells Rehearse 7pm Choir Rehearse **Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen Day**	**25**	26
27 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**28** 11am Prayer Group	**29**	**30** 9:30am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Lent Service	**31** 6pm Bells Rehearse 7pm Choir Rehearse		